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S P E E C H
IN PARLIAMENT,

Of the Right Honourable,

WILLIAM

Lord Say and Seale, Master of his
Majesties Court of Wards and Liveries: and
one of his Majesties most Honoura-
ble Privy Councill.

Declared

AGAINST THE SUPRE-
macy of *Bishops*, and their power in Civill
affaires, and Courts of Justice.

By a true Copie.

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A SPEECH OF THE

Right honourable, **W**illiam,

Lord Vicount S A Y, and S E A L, one

of his Majesties most honourable

privy Councell; Spoken in Parlia-

ment upon the Bill against

the B I S H O P S.

My Lords,

I Shall not need to begin as high as *Adam* in answer to what hath been drawne downe from thence by the Bishop of *Lincolne* concerning this question; for that which is pertinent to it, will onely be what concernes Bishops as they are Ministers of the Gospell, what was before) (being of another nature) can give no rule to this. The question that will lye before your Lordships in passing of this bill, is not whether Episcopacie (I meane this Hierarchicall Episcopacie which the world now holds forth to us) shall be taken away root and branch, but whether these exuberant and superfluous branches which draw away the sap from the tree, and divert it from the right and proper use, whereby it becomes unfruitfull, shall be cut off, as they use to pluck up suckers from the root. The question will be no more but this, whether Bishops shall be reduced to what they were in their first advancement over the Presbyters (which although it were but a humane device for the remedy of Schisme, yet were they in those times least offensive) or continue still with the addition of such things, as their owne ambition, and the ignorance and superstition of succeeding times did adde thereunto, and which are now continued for severall politick ends, things altogether inconsistent with their calling and function, as they are Ministers, of the Gospell, and thereupon such, as ever have bin, and ever will be hurtfull to themselves, and make them hurtfull to others in the times and places where they are continued. And these things alone this Bill takes way, that is, their offices and places in Courts of Judicature, and their employments by obligation of office

office in civill affaires : I shall insist upon this to shew first how these things hurt themselves ; and secondly, how they have made, and ever will make them hurtfull to others ; They themselves are hurtfull thereby in their consciences and in their minds ; In their consciences by seeking or admitting things which are inconsistent with that function and office which God hath set them apart unto. They are separated unto a speciall work, & men must take heed how they mis-employ things dedicated and set apart to the service of God ; they are called to preach the Gospell and set apart to the work of the Ministry, and the Apostle saith, who is sufficient for these things, shewing that this requireth the whole man, and all is too little, therefore for them to seek, or take other offices which shall require and tie them to employ their times and studies in the affaires of this world, will draw a guilt upon them, as being inconsistent with that which God doth call them and set them apart unto. In this respect our Saviour hath expressly prohibited it, telling his Apostles, *that they should not Lord it over their Brethren, nor exercise Jurisdiction over them, as was used in civill governments among the Heathen* : They were called gracious Lords, and exercised Jurisdiction as Lords over others, and sure they might lawfully doe so : but to the Ministers of the Gospell our Saviour gives this Rule, *It shall not be so done by you ; If yee strive for greatnesse, ye shall be the greatest, that is the greatest servant to the rest* : therefore in another place he saith, *He that putteth his hand to the plow and looketh backe to the things of this world, is not fit for the Kingdom of God*, that is, the preaching of the Gospell, as it is usually called. To be thus withdrawn by intrangling themselves with the affaires of this life, by the necessitie and dutie of an Office received from men, from the discharge of that office which God hath called them unto, brings a woe upon them ; *Woe unto me*, saith the Apostle, *if I preach not the Gospell*, what doth he meane ? If a preach not once a quarter, or once a yeare in the Kings Chappell ? No, he himselfe interpreteth it ; *Preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, rebuke, exhort, or instruct, with all long suffering and doctrine* : He that hath an office, must attend upon his office, especially this of the Ministry : practise of the Apostles is answerable to the direction, and do-

Ornaments of our Saviour. There never was, nor will be, men of so great abilities and gifts as they were indued withall, yet they thought it inconsistent vwith their Calling to take places of Iudicature in ciuill matters upon them; that they vwould not admit of the distraction that a businesse farre more agreeable to their callings, then those would cast upon them, and they give the reason of it in the sixth of the *Acts*, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve Tables. And againe, when they had appointed them to chuse men fit for their businesse, they institute an office rather for taking care of the poore, then they by it would be distracted from the principall worke of their calling; But we (sayd they) vvill give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word, Did the Apostles thinke it unreasonable for them to bee hindered from giving themselves continually to preaching the Word, and Prayer, by taking care for the Tables of the poore Widowes, and can the Bishops now thinke it reasonable for them to contend for making politick Lawes? If they shall be thought fit to sit in such places, they must be knowing men in businesse of State, and thereby both their time and studie must be necessarily diuerted from that vvwhich God hath called them unto; And this sure is much more unlawfull for them to admit of, then that vvwhich the Apostles rejected as a distraction unreasonable for them to be interrupted by. The doctrine of the Apostles is agreeable to their practice herein, for *Paul* vvhen hee instructeth *Timothy* for the vvorke of the Ministry, preisseth this argument from the example of a good Souldier, no man that vvarreth intangleth himself vvith the affaires of the world: I conclude, That vvwhich by the commandement of our Saviour, is prohibited to the Ministers of the Gospel, and shewed to be such a distraction unto them from their Callings and functions, as will bring a woe upon them, and is not reasonable for them to admit of; if they shall notwithstanding intangle themselves withall, and enter into, it vvill bring a guilt upon their soules, and hurt them in respect of their consciences.

In the next place it doth blemish them, and strike them in their credit, so farre from truth is that position vvwhich they desire to possess the world withall, that vvlesse they may have these

these outward trappings of worldly pompe added to the Ministry, that Calling will grow into contempt, and bee despised. The truth is, these things cast contempt upon them in the eyes of men. They gaine them eap and courtesie, but they have cast them out of the consciences of men, and the reason is this, every thing is esteemed as it is eminent in its own proper excellencie; the eye in seeing, and not in hearing; the eare in hearing, nor in speaking; The one would be rather monstrous then comely, the other is ever acceptable being proper; so it is with them, their proper excellency is spirituall, the denyall of the world with the pompe and preferments thereof, this they should teach and practise, but when they contrary hereunto seeke after a worldly excellency, like the great men of the world, and to rule and domineer as they doe contrary to our Saviours precept *Vos autem non sic*, but it shall not be so amongst you; instead of honour and esteem, they have brought upon themselves in the hearts of the people that contempt and odium which they now lie under, and that justly and necessarily, because the world seeth that they prefer a worldly excellency, and run after it, and contend for it, before their owne; which being spirituall is farre more excellent, and which being proper to the Ministry, is that alone which will put a value and esteeme upon them that are of that Calling. As these things hurt themselves in their consciences and credit so have they, and, if they bee continued still will make them hurtfull to others; The reason is, because they breake out of their owne orbe, and more irregularly; there is a curse upon their living of their owne place. The heavenly bodies while they keepe within their own spheres give light and comfort to the world. But if they would breake out, and fall from their regular and proper motions, they would set the world on fire, so have these done while they kept themselves to the worke of their Ministry alone, and gave themselves to Prayer, and Ministry of the Word, according to the example of the Apostles, the world received the greatest benefits by them, they were the light, and life thereof. But when their ambition cast them down like stars from heaven to earth, and they did grow once to be advanced above their brethren, I doe appeale to all who have been versed in the ancient Ecclesiasticall

stories, or moderne Histories, whether they have not been the common incendiaries of the Christian world, never ceasing from contention one with another about precedency of their Sees, and Churches, Excommunicating one another, drawing Princes to be parties with them, and thereby casting them into bloody warres. Their ambition, and meddling with secular affairs and State businesse, hath been the cause of shedding more Christian blood than any thing else in the Christian world; and this no man can deny that is versed in History; But we need not goe out of our own Kingdome for example of their insolency and cruelty; when they had a dependancy upon the Pope, and any footing thereby out of the Land, there were never any that carried themselves with so much scorn and insolency towards the Princes of this Kingdome, as they have done. Two of them the Bishop that last spake hath named, but instances of many more may be given, whereof there would be no end. Although the Pope be cast off, yet now there is another inconveniencie no lesse prejudiciall to the Kingdome by their sitting in this house, and that is, they have such an absolute dependency upon the King, that they sit not here as freemen. That which is requisite to freedome, is to be void of hope and feare; He that can lay downe these is a freeman, and will be so in this house; But for the Bishops as the case stands with them, it is not likely they will lay aside their hopes, greater bishopricks being still in expectancy, and for their feares they cannot lay them downe, since their places and seats in Parliament are not invested in them by blood, and soles hereditary, but by annexation of a Barony to their office, and depending upon that office, so that they may bee deprived of their office, and thereby of their places at the Kings pleasure, they doe not so much as sit here *dum bene se gesserim*, as the Judges now by your Lordships petition to the King have their places granted, but at will and pleasure, and therefore as they were all excluded by Edward the first as long as he pleased, and Lawes made *exclusio Clero*, so may they be by any King in like manner, they must needs therefore be in absolute dependencie upon the Crown, and thereby at devotion for their Votes, which how prejudiciall it hath been, and will be, to this house, I need not say.

I have

I have not shewed your Lordships how hurtfull to themselves and others these things which the Bill would take away have been, I will only answer some Objections which I have met withall, and then crave your pardon for troubling you so long,

Object. 1. It will be said that they have been very ancients.

2. That they are established by Law.

3. That it may be an infringement to the priviledges of the House of Peeres, for the House of Commons to send up a Bill to take away some of their members,

To these three Objections, the answer will be *three*.

1. To the first, *Antiquity is no good plea, for that which is by experience found to be hurtfull, the longer it hath done hurt, the more cause there is now to remove it, that it may doe no more, besides other irregularities are as ancient which have been thought fit to be redressed, and this not so ancient, but that it may truly be said, Non stat sit ab initio.*

2. For being established by Law, the Law makers have the same power, and the same change to alter old Laws, as ancient ones, as to make new ones.

3. For priviledge of the House it can be no breach of it, for the other estate may propose to other by way of Bill what they conceive to be for publike good, and they have power respelctively of accepting, or refusing.

There are two other Objections which may seem to have more force, but they will receive satisfactory answers.

The one is, that if they may remove Bishops, they may as Well next time remove Barons and Earles: for answer.

The Reason is not the same, the one sitting by an Honor invested.

vested in their blood, and hereditary, which though it be in the King to grant alone, yet being once granted, he cannot take away; the other sitting by a Barony, dependeth upon an office which may be taken away; for if they be deprived of their office, they sit not.

2. Their sitting is not so essentiell, for Laws have been, and may be made, they being all excluded, but it can never be shewd that ever there were Laws made by the King and them, the Lords and Earles excluded.

The other Objection is this, that this Bill alters the foundation of this House; and Innovations which shake foundations are dangerous.

I answer first, that if there should be an error in the foundation, when it shall be found, and the master-builders be met together, they may, may they ought rather to amend it, than to suffer it to run on still, to the prejudice and danger of the whole structure.

2. Secondly, I say this is not fundamental to this House, for it hath stood without them, and done all that appertaines to the power thereof without them, yea, they being wholly excluded, and that which hath been done for a time at the Kings pleasure, may be done with as little danger for a longer time, and when it appears to be so, and for publike good, not only may, but ought to be done altogether by the supreme Power.

FINIS